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The role and potential of community based cancer care for Māori in Aotearoa/New Zealand

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Abstract

There are unacceptable ethnic differences in cancer survival in Aotearoa/New Zealand and quality of life differs between Māori and non-Māori at all stages of the cancer journey. Overseas studies have recognised that all the priorities for cancer services are affected by actions in primary care – reducing the risk of cancer, early detection and faster access to specialist treatment, improved support for patients living with cancer, and reducing inequalities. Additionally, the importance of strategic policy to direct practical and effective community-based cancer care has also been identified. Māori health provider organisations have been using a ‘Whānau Ora’ approach to provide primary health care services for over twenty years; however their contributions to cancer care have been largely invisible. This qualitative study explores the role and potential of community based cancer care for Māori as a means to addressing three study questions:

- What helps patients and whānau to access and receive cancer services?
- What is the role of primary care, which includes Māori health providers and mainstream providers, in facilitating access into and through cancer care services?
- Does current cancer control policy adequately address Māori needs?

Using a case study approach, participants from four areas of cancer care were recruited within a Māori-centred, ethic of care framework, to explore the experiences of those who plan, manage and administer, deliver, and receive cancer care. The main source of data was in-depth semi-structured interviews.

The key themes identified from this research are that: whānau hold critical and multiple roles across cancer care; there are gaps in supportive cancer care and information that is appropriate for Māori; ongoing relationships with a primary

health care provider assist whānau to navigate their cancer journeys, with Māori health providers in particular, delivering wide ranging cancer care services, and linking patients with mainstream services; engaging successfully with the cancer care system currently requires an individual rather than collective approach; cultural safety education should extend across all cancer care services; communication between cancer care providers is improving and; cancer control policy in Aotearoa has a universal focus which does not adequately address Māori needs.

The role of primary care is pivotal in Māori cancer care access, from prevention through to survival, and must be at the forefront of cancer policy.

Acknowledgement of the different support and quality of life needs of Māori, including recognition of the interdependence of whānau as a strength, is required. Māori health providers have the potential to play a much greater role in cancer care and support, but sustainable funding models are required if Māori health providers are to continue, and expand on, the wide range of work that they undertake within their communities. The newly implemented Whānau Ora Initiatives may provide a vehicle for provision of sustainable community cancer care services.

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Table of Contents

Chapter 1	1
Introduction	
1. Thesis introduction	2
1.1 Research objectives	3
1.2 Scope of the research	4
1.3 Thesis organisation	6
Chapter 2	9
Background	
2. Literature review	10
2.1 Māori in Aotearoa	11
2.2 The colonisation of Aotearoa	14
2.3 Māori activism and development	18
2.4 Cultural safety	23
2.5 The need for equitable health care	26
2.6 The importance of relationships in primary care	36
2.7 Cancer overview	39
2.8 Māori access to cancer care services	42
2.9 Navigating the cancer treatment system	53
2.10 The role of Māori health providers in cancer care	57
2.11 Cancer control in Aotearoa	60
2.12 Cancer policy in Aotearoa	64

Chapter 3	78
Methodology and Methods	
3. The Ethic of Care Theory	90
3.1 Applying the theories	102
Study Design	
3.2 Outlining the case study design	109
Methods	
3.3 Data collection methods	119
3.4 Analysis process	126
3.5 Ethics	128
 Chapter 4	 132
Case 1: Patients and Whānau	
4. Patient and whānau backgrounds	133
4.1 Three phases of care	139
4.2 Supportive care	144
4.3 Continuity of care	152
4.4 Impact of wider social determinants of health	155
4.5 Summary	158

Chapter 5	161
Case 2: Community	
5. Roles and backgrounds	162
5.1 The role of whānau in cancer care	164
5.2 Whānau support needs	169
5.3 Advocacy	171
5.4 Information	173
5.5 Support services	175
5.6 Funding and organisational kaupapa	178
5.7 Relationships between whānau and primary health care providers	181
5.8 Continuity of care throughout the cancer journey	186
5.9 Communication and relationships between providers	187
5.10 Gatekeeping	193
5.11 The provision of culturally safe care	196
5.12 'Being in front'	199
5.13 The Māori cancer care workforce	205
5.14 Summary	208
 Chapter 6	 212
Case 3: Managers	
6. Roles and backgrounds	213
6.1 Continuity of care	215
6.2 Flexible appointments and a welcoming reception	217
6.3 Appropriate Information for Māori with cancer	221

6.4	Communication between those giving and receiving cancer care	224
6.5	The 'bridging' role of Māori health providers	226
6.6	The role of whānau throughout the cancer care journey	237
6.7	Equitable access to treatment and resources	242
6.8	Changes to the cancer care workforce	246
6.9	Summary	251
 Chapter 7		 253
Case 4: Policy		
7.	Roles and backgrounds	254
7.1	Organisational engagement with Māori	257
7.2	The role of Māori health providers in cancer care	261
7.3	The value of good relationships between organisations	263
7.4	Information sharing between primary and secondary care	269
7.5	Regional variation of palliative care provision	273
7.6	The place of whānau ora in cancer care for Māori	276
7.7	Administration of cancer service funding contracts	278
7.8	Information for cancer patients and whānau	285
7.9	Supportive care	294
7.10	Summary	299

Chapter 8	303
Discussion	
8. Discussion	304
8.1 Study limitations and strengths	344
 Chapter 9	348
Conclusions	
 Bibliography	354

List of Figures and Tables

Figures

Figure 1: Lower part of Te Ika a Maui (the North Island of Aotearoa)	112
Figure 2: Circles of personalist care ethics applied to study themes (adapted from Denier & Gastmans, (2013))	306

Tables

Table 1: Literature on Māori access to cancer care	43
Table 2: The current health policy environment related to cancer care for Māori	65
Table 3: Characteristics of four identified types of research, science and technology (Cunningham, 2000)	82
Table 4: Basic beliefs (metaphysics) of alternative inquiry paradigms (Lincoln, Lynham & Guba, 2011)	88

Table 5: Tronto's (1993,1998) four categories of care applied to cancer care	103
Table 6: Data collection process for each case	121

List of Appendices

Appendix 1	The role and potential of community based cancer care for Māori in Aotearoa/New Zealand
Appendix 2	'It's whanaungatanga and all that kind of stuff': Māori cancer patients' experiences of health services.
Appendix 3	Exploring Māori cancer patients' their families' community and hospice views of hospice care
Appendix 4	Patient and whānau information sheet
Appendix 5	Patient and whānau consent form
Appendix 6	Patient and whānau interview schedule
Appendix 7	Key informant information sheet
Appendix 8	Key informant consent form
Appendix 9	Key informant interview schedule
Appendix 10	Circles of personalist care ethics (Denier & Gastmans, 2013)

Glossary

Aotearoa	Land of the long white cloud. New Zealand
awhi	embrace, support
hapū	sub tribe
hīmene	hymn
hinengaro	mental state
hui	meeting

iwi	tribe
kai	food
kaimahi	worker
kanohi	face
kanohi ki te kanohi	face to face
karakia	prayer
kaumātua	elder
kaupapa	topic, idea, foundation
Kaupapa Māori	Māori foundation
Kite	basket
Kohanga reo	Māori language nests
Ko wai au	What do I bring to this?
korero	talk, to speak
Māori	normal (also the name of the Indigenous people of Aotearoa)
Māoridom	the Māori world
marae	meeting ground
manuhiri	visitors, or proper behaviour with new people
matua	father
mihi	greet
mirimiri	massage
mokopuna (or moko)	grandchildren
noho whakaiti	appropriately quiet and watchful
ora	wellness
Pākehā	descendants of colonial settlers from England, Ireland, Scotland and Wales
Pounamu	greenstone
rongoā	medicine
tane/tāne	man/men

tamariki/tāmariki	child/children
tangata whenua	people of the land
tapu	sacred, forbidden
Te Ao Māori	the Māori world
Te Reo Māori	the Māori language
Te wanatanga katoa	complete governance
tikanga Māori	Māori values and beliefs
tinana	physical body
tūpuna	ancestor
wahine/wāhine	woman/women
waiata	song
wairua	spirit
whakairo	carving
whakamā	shy
whakapapa	genealogical table, cultural identity
whānau	people connected by whakapapa or kaupapa
whānau ora	healthy families
whenua	land
whakapapa	lineage, genealogical table, cultural identity
whanaungatanga	relationship, kinship
whare	house
wairua	spirit, attitude

Abbreviations

CEO	Chief Executive Officer
CCDHB	Capital and Coast District Health Board
CCNZ	Cancer Control New Zealand
DHB	District Health Board
DNA	Did Not Attend
GP	General Practitioner
HRC	Health Research Council
IPA	Independent Practitioner Association
ISP	Independent Service Provider
KOETI	Kia Ora e Te Iwi
MWWL	Māori Women's Welfare League
NSU	National Screening Unit
NZ	New Zealand
PHO	Primary Health Organisation
UN	United Nations
WHO	World Health Organisation
WINZ	Work and Income New Zealand